



(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 to prioritize urban and community forestry assistance for areas with low tree equity scores, to establish a grant program to enhance public elementary and secondary school rooftop gardens, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SCHIFF introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To amend the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 to prioritize urban and community forestry assistance for areas with low tree equity scores, to establish a grant program to enhance public elementary and secondary school rooftop gardens, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Climate Change Relief
5 for Urban Areas Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. PRIORITIZATION OF URBAN AND COMMUNITY FOR-**
2 **ESTRY ASSISTANCE TO AREAS WITH LOW**
3 **TREE EQUITY SCORES.**

4 Section 9 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act
5 of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2105) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (c), by adding at the end the
7 following: “In carrying out this section, the Sec-
8 retary shall give priority to providing assistance to
9 State foresters or equivalent State officials serving
10 areas with the lowest tree equity scores, as deter-
11 mined by the Secretary”;

12 (2) in subsection (h)—

13 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at
14 the end;

15 (B) in paragraph (3), by striking the pe-
16 riod and adding “; and”; and

17 (C) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(4) the term ‘tree equity score’ means a tree
19 equity score, as determined by the Secretary, that
20 is—

21 “(A) either—

22 “(i) substantially similar to the tree
23 equity score established by American For-
24 ests (or a successor tree equity score devel-
25 oped by such conservation organization or
26 other similar organization); or

1 “(ii) a tree equity tool that the Sec-
2 retary determines is most appropriate for
3 the communities served by such tool; and

4 “(B) based on how the tree canopy and
5 surface temperature of an area align with in-
6 come, employment, race, age, and health factors
7 of that area as determined by consulting with
8 community representatives or community-based
9 organizations.”; and

10 (3) in subsection (i), by striking “fiscal years
11 1991 through 1995” and inserting “fiscal years
12 2023 through 2028”.

13 **SEC. 3. PILOT GRANT PROGRAM TO PUBLIC ELEMENTARY**
14 **AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ROOFTOP GAR-**
15 **DENS.**

16 (a) **PILOT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.**—The Secretary
17 shall establish a competitive grant program under which
18 the Secretary shall make grants to eligible entities to es-
19 tablish or expand rooftop gardens.

20 (b) **APPLICATION.**—To be eligible to receive a grant
21 under this section, an eligible entity shall submit to the
22 Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,
23 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
24 quire, including the square feet of the proposed rooftop
25 garden (or expansion of such rooftop garden).

1 (c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
2 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to the eligible entities
3 that have the lowest garden equity score, as determined
4 by the Secretary based on, with respect to the area in
5 which the eligible entity is located, the population density,
6 racial composition, incidence of respiratory illness, number
7 of urban gardens, food sovereignty, and average surface
8 temperature.

9 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
10 a grant under this section shall use the grant funds to
11 carry out each of the following:

12 (1) Assessing (including through architectural
13 analysis) if the area identified for purposes of estab-
14 lishing or expanding a rooftop garden can support
15 such garden or expansion and the construction
16 thereof.

17 (2) Applying for permits with respect to such
18 rooftop garden.

19 (3) Establishing a financial plan with respect to
20 the establishment or expansion of such rooftop gar-
21 den.

22 (4) Designing a rooftop garden—

23 (A) of which at least 20 percent is com-
24 prised of native plants, fruits, or vegetables;

1 (B) that does not include plants identified
2 by the State in which such garden is located as
3 invasive species;

4 (C) using best practices to reduce risk of
5 contaminants (such as using cleaning soil in
6 raised garden beds); and

7 (D) either—

8 (i) a strategy for increasing energy ef-
9 ficiency and increasing the surface ability
10 of a building to reflect sunlight and absorb
11 less solar energy; or

12 (ii) if the strategy in clause (i) is not
13 feasible, a strategy to increase habitat and
14 food availability for pollinators, manage
15 rainwater, or provide other benefits to the
16 community.

17 (5) Incorporating into the science curriculum of
18 the entity—

19 (A) an urban agriculture lesson plan; or

20 (B) a lesson plan on pollinator habitat,
21 green infrastructure for heat or stormwater
22 management, or remediation of soil and water
23 contaminants by plants.

24 (e) ORGANIC REQUIREMENT.—An eligible entity that
25 receives a grant under this section may only use organic

1 farming methods with respect to a rooftop garden estab-
2 lished or expanded by such grant.

3 (f) ROUTINE INSPECTIONS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall inspect
5 each rooftop garden for which a grant is awarded
6 under this section once each year.

7 (2) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary
8 may enter into contracts with appropriate entities to
9 carry out the inspections required under paragraph
10 (1).

11 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
13 ty” means a public elementary school or secondary
14 school.

15 (2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “elementary
16 school” and “secondary school” have the meanings
17 given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary
18 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
19 7801).

20 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Agriculture.

22 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
24 \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2028.